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Recd: OCTOBER 23, 1962

3:30 PM

FROM: BERLIN

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 557, OCTOBER 23, 3 PM

PRIORITY

ACTION DEPARTMENT 557, INFORMATION BONN 508, LONDON 334,  
TO MOSCOW 314, PARIS 346, SHAPE 228, USAREUR 329.

PARIS ALSO FOR USRO AND MOGULIRE

USAREUR FOR POLAD

SHAPE FOR STOEGSEL AND US ELEMENT LINE CAK

FIRST BLUSH BERLIN REACTION TO PRESIDENT'S CUBA STATEMENT  
APPEARS IN FULL SUPPORT IN WEST BERLIN AND PLAYING DOWN IN  
EAST BERLIN.SEVERAL LEADING OFFICIALS OF WEST BERLIN GOVT AND BOTH POLITICAL  
PARTIES WITH WHOM MISSION OFFICERS TALKED TODAY WELCOMED US  
MOVES AND REMAINED GENERALLY CALM AND CONFIDENT DESPITE AWARE-  
NESS DEVELOPMENTS COULD BRING ABOUT EXACERBATION IN BERLIN  
SITUATION. SAID NO EVIDENCE UNUSUAL ANXIETY, BUT RATHER WIDE-  
SPREAD ENTHUSIASM THAT US HAS SEIZED INITIATIVE IN EAST-WEST  
CONFLICT AND DEMONSTRATED COURAGE AND DETERMINATION. THREE  
WEST BERLIN LABOR LEADERS ENTHUSIASTICALLY ENDORSED PRESIDENT'S  
ACTION IN CONVERSATION WITH US MISSION OFFICER. SAID THIS  
EXACTLY WAY TO HANDLE COMMUNISTS; RUSSIANS ALWAYS BACK DOWN  
BEFORE RESOLUTE ACTION. APPRECIATED PRESIDENT'S POINTED  
REFERENCE BERLIN. ONLY ONE IN PASSING MENTIONED POSSIBLE  
DANGERS. IN ADDITION, RANDOM COMMENTS OTHER WEST BERLINERS  
INDICATED WIDESPREAD POPULAR APPROVAL US INITIATIVE THIS  
INSTANCE. REACTION DESCRIBED TO US BY CORRESPONDENTS HERE AS  
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-3- 557, OCTOBER 23, 6 PM, FROM: BERLIN

GENERAL IS ENCOURAGEMENT THAT US HAS FINALLY TAKEN VIGOROUS AND POSITIVE ACTION AGAINST COMMUNISTS. SOME POPULAR EXPECTATION PETERSONS ON FOR BERLIN, BUT THIS POSSIBILITY APPARENTLY BEING ACCEPTED CALMLY BY PUBLIC.

WEST BERLIN AFTERNOON PAPERS FRONT PAGED PRESIDENT'S SPEECH AND HEARTILY ENDORSED IT IN EDITORIAL COMMENT. SAID US SOVIET HAS NO CHOICE BUT RESPOND TO COMMUNIST CHALLENGE IN CARIBBEAN, AND WAS ACTING IN SELF-DEFENSE. DER ABEND (11D) SAID SOVS HAVE AGAIN BEEN GIVEN UNMISTAKABLE EVIDENCE US NOT DISPOSED ACCEPT CONTINUAL THREATS TO PEACE IN CUBA OR ELSEWHERE, INCLUDING BERLIN. KURIER (FRG-100) SAID PRESIDENT'S MENTION BERLIN AND ANNOUNCEMENT US FORCES THROUGHOUT WORLD ON ALERT ESPECIALLY WELCOME REASSURANCE. COMMENTED NEXT DAYS WOULD BRING TEST OF NERVES, BUT BERLINERS KNOW WESTERN STRENGTH BEST GUARANTEE OF PEACE.

WE WERE TOLD BY WEST GERMAN CORRESPONDENT THAT NEUES DEUTSCHLAND EDITOR AND, SEPARATELY, INFORMATION MINISTRY OFFICIAL EAST BERLIN PRIVATELY DENIED TO HIM SOVIET MISSILE EMPLACEMENTS CUBA. MAINTAINED SOVIETS WOULD NEVER LAY SLEEVES OPEN FOR CRITICISM BY SUCH OBVIOUS ACTIVITIES IN CUBA. ARGUED PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT MOTIVATED PRIMARILY BY DOMESTIC POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS PRIOR US ELECTIONS. APPEARED VIEW REPERCUSSIONS CALMLY. IN CONVERSATION AT SPANDAU LUNCH AT WHICH MISSION OFFICERS AND SOVIET EMBASSY AND MILITARY OFFICERS PRESENTED SOVIETS OWN INITIATIVE RAISED SUBJECT IN RELAXED MANNER AND TOOK POSITION PROPOSED SHIP SEARCH ILLEGAL AND US ACTION HAD DOMESTIC POLITICAL MOTIVATION. SOVIET EMBASSY THIRD SECRETARY APPEARED SURPRISED WHEN TOLD PRESIDENT HAD NOT ANNOUNCED FULL BLOCKADE. SAID PROPOSED SEARCH OF SOVIET SHIPS COULD BE VERY DANGEROUS AND ASKED IF THERE NO OTHER WAY SOLVE PROBLEM.

EAST GERMAN WIRE SERVICE CASTIGATED AGGRESSIVE U.S. MEASURES WHICH IT DESCRIBED AS COMPLETE SEA BLOCKADE. CONTRASTED PEACEFUL INTENTIONS CUBA. STRESSED GRATIFICATION FEDERAL REPUBLIC AND GOVERNOR BRAIST WITH U.S. MEASURE. NEUES DEUTSCHLAND REFERRED ILLEGALITY OF ANNOUNCED "EVEN MORE RIGOROUS BLOCKADE," BUT CITED "ALLEGED PURPOSE HINDER TRANSPORT OFFENSIVE

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OFFENSIVE WEAPONS."

COMMENT: NOTABLY WEST AS WELL AS EAST MEDIA AND INDIVIDUALS CALL US ACTION "BLOCKADE." DISTINCTION BETWEEN THIS AND "AMERICAN QUARANTINE ON SHIPMENTS OFFENSIVE WEAPONS TO CUBA" APPARENTLY WILL REQUIRE CONTINUING PUBLIC INFORMATION EFFORT. ALSO, RELEASE CONVINCING PHOTOGRAPHS OF SOVIET MISSILE EMPLACEMENTS CUBA, IF FEASIBLE, WOULD BE USEFUL HERE JUDGING FROM SOME SCATTERED SKEPTICISM.

LIGHTNER

DMJ

NOTE: Advance copies to BTF and SS 10-23-62 CWO-M

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